

Newsletter



Manchester
Buddhist Centre

February 2010

Glenn Millar 1958 - 2010

In this newsletter we celebrate the life of Glenn Millar, a member of our sangha, who died on 9th January in North Manchester General Hospital after a short illness. While he was in hospital family and friends, including members of our sangha, visited him every day. His funeral and cremation were held on Friday 29th January, the chapel filled by his family and friends.

The words below were pinned up on a wall in his flat. They were also printed in the programme card for his funeral. Glenn must have recognised himself in them. Judging from accounts of him given by two close friends at his funeral and the rejoicing in his merits printed here, those who knew him also recognised him in these words:

"For those who in health or illness like to be alone. Very quiet people, who move about without noise, speak little, and then gently. Very independent, capable and self-reliant. Almost free of the opinions of others. They are aloof, leave people alone and go their own way. Often clever and talented. Their peace and calmness is a blessing to those around them."

It is strange, almost incredible, that they were written by Dr Edward Bach to describe the symptoms of loneliness for which his flower remedy was 'water violet'. Rather these words are a magnificence, something to

aspire to. One of the Buddhas titles, used in the Shakyamuni mantra, is "muni muni". This form is likely based on there being two meanings: 'muni' - the contemplative or Silent One and 'muni' - the sage or Wise One. So, the Silent Sage.

Recently I have thought that if I cannot gain Enlightenment in this life then the very least I can aspire to is a 'good death'. This I see as acceptance, non-attachment, letting go of everything at the final moment. I believe that Glenn had a 'good death'.

Glenn was also an artist. In seeing the transformation of the individual from 'fully human' to 'Buddha' as the Higher Evolution there is a stage called the 'True Artist'. This is someone who has glimpses of Reality, Ultimate Truth - these glimpses inspire the art and become longer and longer with continued practice.

It is good to think of Glen following in the footsteps of the Buddha and being an example to us all. **Nishpara**
Rejoicing in Glenn is continued inside



Notes from the Chair

Two main things have happened this month which I would like to tell you about - my first European Chairs Assembly and my public Sangha welcome.



In early January I went on my first European Chairs Assembly meeting at Dhanakosa. It started on the day we had had all the snow overnight in Manchester and it took me over two and a half hours to do the five miles from home to Piccadilly station! I did wonder on a few occasions if I was actually going to make it! Fortunately, and unexpectedly, the further north I travelled the easier the journey became! However it did take others two and three days! (I imagine you have your own weather stories to tell from that time!)

These meetings happen twice a year - winter and summer - and are a gathering of European Chairs and representatives from Movement-wide "organisations" or interests, such as Windhorse Trading, Free Buddhist Audio, Karuna Trust. Our very own Munisha also attends from Clear Vision.

They seem to be a combination of networking (I found it very helpful as a new Chair talking to Chairs of similar centres to ours - even picked up some helpful tips just passing through the Glasgow Buddhist Centre!); information exchange (numerous helpful presentations from our various organisations, as mentioned above); and strategy/business.

In 2007 the meeting decided on six strategic priorities. One of these, for example, was 'telling our story' and a book on the history of the FWBO is due out shortly. Many of the activities for young people that are happening around the movement are also part of these strategies. They are going to be reviewed at this summer's meeting.

Most centres make a financial contribution to the Chairs Assembly Fund which in turn contributes to different projects across the world. For example, recently it has helped to support Clear Vision, Free Buddhist Audio and work in India. These are all things which you, by your dana, are helping to support. I would like to say more about these in the coming year, but for now, just want to thank you for enabling the MBC to make our contribution to this fund, and to thank you for supporting these projects.

At times I felt slightly overwhelmed by all the input and the "weight" of the meeting whilst at the same time, imagining how different I will feel in the summer with another six

Continued inside

PARINIRVANA DAY

Monday 15 February

On Parinirvana Day, one of the four main festivals of the Buddhist year, we commemorate Buddha Shakyamuni's death, the end of his 40-year ministry and his passing beyond the material world, time and space.

For Buddhists, this day in the year is a precious opportunity to remember our family and friends who have also left this world, and to remember the inescapable truth of our own passing. If we truly recognise the inevitability of death, it is much more likely that we shall resolve to dedicate whatever remains of our life to whatever we hold most dear.

This year's festival will be led by our brand new Chair, Dayamala, with some help from me. The day will consist of three parts:

1. 14.00 to 17.00 - a practice afternoon for Order members and mitras, with meditation, reflection on the theme "If death alone is certain, but the time of death unknown, what should I do?" and sharing of personal experiences of death and dying.

2. 17.30 to 18.30 - a shared vegetarian meal (please bring a contribution)
3. 19.00 to 21.30 - festival evening (open to all). There will be a talk by Dayamala, an introduction to the mysteriously-named 'ROT' group and some thought-provoking ritual, finishing off with a colourful puja.

If you're planning to come to the evening session, you're invited to bring some photographs: one of anybody close to you who has died in the last year, and another of yourself - don't be embarrassed, everyone else will probably appreciate the latter more than you do! All will be revealed on the evening!

In keeping with a time-honoured tradition at the Manchester Buddhist Centre, we'll also remember those who've died in the last year through the reading of their names and, perhaps, a short sentence describing them. If you have a contribution to make to this ritual, could you please prepare what you'd like to be said, and give it to me in writing before the evening session?

Hope to see you there,

Chandana

Rejoicing in Glenn

The Lovely Mr Millar

I have many memories of Glenn, as we got closer over the years, we'd see each other most weeks. We first met five years ago or so, making shrines together at the Buddhist centre and when Jutika created a small team for the Five Buddha Mandala year long ritual. Our friendship started off gently and increased over the last two years, when he became a close friend. He was one of a kind and I can't take in he that he is gone yet.

We hung out, went to art galleries, made malas and talked.

He came up to the Yorkshire Dales with me one day, I went with him to the hospital for an appointment and he came with me to one of mine. We met through physical suffering, loss, through art, Buddhism, ritual and just plain liking each other. We met in different ways. I have lost someone who accepted me, warts and all, and had a tender heart. I've shed quite a lot of tears with him and now for him. But that's really for me, as he didn't want people crying over him.

He knew suffering and had faced death several years ago. He seemed to have had an insight from that which made him less fearful of death and he actively engaged with the many things that were happening to him in his body, like the year before when he had both hips replaced. He didn't make a big drama about all the medical appointments he had. I got the sense that it wasn't always plain sailing and he was trying to speak out more, but that he didn't take himself or others too seriously either.

In my experience Glenn was a quiet gentleman, who tended to be in the background of centre affairs. Whilst he appeared reluctant to react and sometimes was difficult to bring into the mainstream of conversation, when he was offered an opportunity to speak he communicated with a confidence that at times gave surprise and added respect to this gentle giant.

I know he enjoyed the early Tuesday afternoon meditation and discussion classes that I led. He was certainly one sangha member who came regularly. As though being wise after the event, I wish I had gleaned more from my friendship with him but I have memories and these must suffice. He will remain an example of the best within us all, a more subtle yet open face of our belief in the Dharma. With Deepest Respect.

Buddharaksita

Our friendship has taught me a lot, in keeping my heart open, having courage in the face of suffering and death and knowing that I am loved. I did feel loved by Glenn. He gently showed me so I didn't notice it. He had steadily let me into his life and I had done the same, like a mutual soft, gentle opening, tender but sometimes sparky. He had a really mischievous way of looking, giggling and being amused by whatever I was getting up to. Or when with Judith and Sattvadhika, all four of us together, he loved sitting back and laughing with us. He could

When Death Comes by Mary Oliver

When death comes
like the hungry bear in autumn;
when death comes and takes all the bright coins from his purse
to buy me, and snaps the purse shut;
when death comes
like the measles-pox;
when death comes
like an iceberg between the shoulder blades,
I want to step through the door full of curiosity, wondering:
what is it going to be like, that cottage of darkness?
And therefore I look upon everything
as a brotherhood and a sisterhood,
and I look upon time as no more than an idea,
and I consider eternity as another possibility,
and I think of each life as a flower, as common
as a field daisy, and as singular,
and each name a comfortable music in the mouth
tending as all music does, toward silence,
and each body a lion of courage, and something
precious to the earth.
When it's over, I want to say: all my life
I was a bride married to amazement.
I was the bridegroom, taking the world into my arms.
When it is over, I don't want to wonder
if I have made of my life something particular, and real.
I don't want to find myself sighing and frightened,
or full of argument.
I don't want to end up simply having visited this world.

Chi Kung and looked after his body very well. I take that as a teaching too, focus on what you need to work on, keep it firmly in mind. What else did he tell me by being himself? Love your body, work to keep your heart open, love yourself, love people and embrace life while facing death but don't take it all too seriously.

Vidyabhadr x

I didn't know Glenn very well at all. We occasionally said hello in the centre, on the street. Yet he made quite an impression on me. He seemed to carry himself with such grace – always stylishly dressed. He had a quietness about him that also held a presence. He seemed a very gentle and kind man. He was a part of the MBC – I often saw him around the centre, chatting, eating. He was just there, and he brought a beauty to the place. I chatted with him most when he was making his photo installation for the Sangha Fest. I saw him carefully wrapping the red thread of friendship around the gold pillars in the reception area, and then wrapping it around the warm, open faces of Sangha members. That installation captured something of the MBC at its best – a place of diversity, openness, friendliness. Glenn caught that, and a for a few days it was there in all its beauty.

Keith Green

I had known Glenn for about three years and in that time we became friends, going for coffee, shopping, retreats and doing shrines together. He was a lovely warm, gentle, private man with a lovely cheeky sense of humour. I will miss him dreadfully it was such a shock. May he rest in peace.

Judith Hartley

Glenn is a man who has had to sit with suffering, sit with change. For me his connection with Padmasambhava relates to this. I am struck by his steady presence at the MBC, his mischievous knowing smile, how he would sit and drink in the environment and other people and the fact that he was straightforward in his communication. May we meet again in the Dharma.

Arthaketu

Glenn was a person of great beauty, gentle, creative, with a vibrant faith in the Dharma. He was very kind to me, very supportive, with lots of depth. I regret not having the opportunity to get to know him further. May he go well. I'll be thinking of you all on the day, with much metta from India.

Shakyajata

Glenn did a Breathworks course a few years ago which is when I had the pleasure of meeting him and getting to know him a little. He struck me straight away as being a very dignified and noble person, but with a twinkle in his eye. I always thought that underneath his very deep and calm quietness there was a man gently amused by life and its quirks. He had a wonderful stillness that meant I always felt calm in his presence - he was one of those people that had the effect of making me feel like a clumsy elephant when I was speedy or fragmented. He would just stand and look and take the world in and in this way act as a mirror for any chaos I may be creating and I would immediately feel less chaotic! What a gift this is from one human being to another. When he spoke I would always listen carefully - he used words wisely and it was always worth listening to him because of this. Another gift. I am glad to have known Glenn and glad that he didn't suffer too badly or for too long in his passing from this life.

Vidyamala

The first occasion that I met Glenn was on one of my introductory meditation courses, when I think I 'borrowed' Glen from another class as a supporter. In this capacity Glen would facilitate small discussion groups - one of the students from such a group told me, only today, how much he appreciated Glenn's gentle but very supportive presence.

I came to work more directly with Glenn last October, when we were on the support team for a weekend retreat with Sona and Vidyamala. We needed to convert a rather drab classroom at a hired venue into a shrine room, in a hurry! Things didn't seem promising until Glenn, who had volunteered to build the shrine, based only on a couple of photos of the room that he'd already seen, worked his magic. In next to no time, while I was busy doing other things, a simple but truly beautiful shrine appeared from nowhere.

After being very impressed with Glen's qualities, I was looking forward to getting to know him better. I'm really sorry that I shan't now have this opportunity, and that the Sangha has lost a lovely, talented man.

Chandana

Rejoicing in Glenn: He was such a gentle presence with always a smile of greeting. I first met him when Suryaka told me he was a painter decorating the meeting room. I thought he was a painter and decorator and only found out much later he created more than lovely fresh rooms for us to enjoy! His art work enhanced and enhances our centre. Talking together was a pleasure and his encouragement made me feel so much more positive about my embryonic attempts at creativity.

Barbara Matthews

With one who does not
speak his every thought
I spend a pleasant evening

I came across this little Zen Haiku by Hyakuchi one snowy morning a couple of weeks ago. Later that day, when we were sitting in the community rejoicing in Glenn, several people spoke of him in such a way that it sounded like this little poem could have been written about, or for, him.

Amitaśūri

Glenn was a very kind and extremely helpful person and very sensitive to other people's needs. I shall miss his quiet, gentle presence in the sangha.

Sara Inkster

A Poplar and the Moon by Siegfried Sassoon

There stood a Poplar, tall & straight;
The fair, round moon, uprisen late,
Made the long shadow on the grass
A ghostly bridge 'twixt heaven and me.
But May, with slumbrous nights must pass;
And blustering winds will strip the tree.
And I've no magic to express
The moment of that loveliness;
So from these words you'll never guess
The stars and lilies I could see

Glenn, was sensitive, gentle & kind. He produced an exquisite, golden shrine at the Sangha retreat in Castleton last year. I got to spend time with him as a 'Focusing' partner. This poem by Siegfried Sassoon reflects what 'I've no magic to express'.

Sue McKenna

I got to know Glenn through Bodywise initially. Over time as I got to know him better I found out about his interest in art and connection to Padmasambhava. When I was leading a lot of rituals around the MBC Glenn often helped me create shrines.

I really appreciated his reliable, capable presence and his love of beauty and simplicity. He took such care and made up for my more slap dash approach. We spent hours putting up and taking down Rowenas lovely flags over two years of ritual! He made some original and beautiful art pieces inspired by the different Buddha figures we were concentrating on in the rituals.

He was very generous with his time and energy and talents. He managed to live within the limits of his health in a way that I found very inspiring. In circumstances that many of us would find frustrating and frightening, he lived with simplicity, beauty and care. Early on in our friendship he told me he wasn't frightened of dying and I believed him. I have been on the receiving end of his kindness and humour and will miss him very much.

Jutika

Full-Moon Pujas 2010

Saturday 30th January	Vajrasattva
Sunday 28th February	White Tara
Tuesday 30th March	Vajrapani
Wednesday 28th April	Green Tara
Friday 28th May	Wesak(Buddha Day)*
Saturday 26th June	Medicine Buddha
Monday 29th July	Dharma Day*
Tuesday 24th August	Prajnaparamita
Thursday 23rd Sept	Amitabha
Saturday 23rd Oct	Avalokitesvara
Sunday 21st Nov	Sangha Day*
Tuesday 21st Dec	Amoghasiddhi

* Festival day - no separate full-moon puja

All pujas begin at 5.45pm and are open to anyone whatever their experience of pujas might be. The full-moon pujas are organised by a team which comprises: Martin MacDonald, Sharon Glasby, Philip Balduini, Nigel Leach and Karunavajri. We're shortly to be re-joined by Judith Hartley. If anyone wishes to join the team to help organise these pujas please leave contact details at reception. To Order Members in the Sangha - if you would like to lead any of the full-moon pujas, then do please get in touch, especially if any of the Buddhas/Bodhisattvas we've chosen to honour this year are your personal 'favourite'.

Full-Moon Puja to White Tara

The goddess of universal compassion, Tara represents virtuous and enlightened action. It is said that her compassion for living beings is stronger than a mother's love for her children. She also brings about longevity, protects earthly travel, and guards her followers on their spiritual journey to enlightenment.

White Tara (Sanskrit: Sitatara) is sometimes called the Mother of all Buddhas and she represents the motherly aspect of compassion. Her white colour signifies purity, wisdom and truth. In iconography, White Tara often has seven eyes - in addition to the usual two, she has a third eye on her forehead and one on each of her hands and feet. This symbolizes her vigilance and ability to see all the suffering in the world.

White Tara is seated in the diamond lotus position, with the soles of her feet pointed upward. Her posture is one of grace and calm. Her right hand makes the boon-granting gesture and her left hand is in the protective 'mudra'. In her left hand, White Tara holds an elaborate lotus flower that contains three blooms. The first is in seed and represents the past Buddha Kashyapa; the second is in full bloom and symbolizes the present Buddha Shakyamuni; the third is ready to bloom and signifies the future Buddha Maitreya. These three blooms symbolize that Tara is the essence of the three Buddhas. White Tara is believed to help her followers overcome obstacles, especially those that inhibit spiritual practice. She is also associated with longevity.

Please come along to the Full-Moon Puja on **Sunday 28th February** and join in our worship and praise of this excellent Bodhisattva.

Karunavajri

Events for Women

Some dates for your diaries:

Tuesday March 2nd 7pm

An evening for women mitras and Dharmacharinis with Dayamala. An opportunity to come together with others for practice, discussion, questions and answers. No need to book just come along on the evening.

Sunday April 17th

Day for women who have asked for ordination - for this day Samantabhadri is coming over to lead the day. Some of you will know her from Taraloka where she lives and runs retreats.

June 11th-13th

Buddhafield North women's camping weekend retreat near Ilkley - led by Padmarshini, Tejapushpa, Taravandana on the theme *Radical Sincerity and the Path to Freedom*. www.buddhafieldnorth.org.uk for more info and to book.

Event for Men

A reminder, on **Sunday 7th February** there will be a day for men mitras, **10.30am to 4.30pm**. The theme ties in with the Parinirvana Festival, revolving around impermanence. For the day I would like you to bring 3 photos of yourself: one very young, one in the middle of your life and one recent one. Please book for this event at reception.

New Womens Community

Are there any OMs or Mitras interested in joining Taravandana, Ratnagita, Shakyajata and Dayavajri in a new Manchester womens' community from June 1st?

You would be sharing a lovely Victorian house with delightful features and a good garden. It is currently the home of the men's Blue Cliff Community situated in a conservation area in Broughton.

So here's an opportunity to deepen your friendships and spiritual practice in the context of sharing a good home with a friendly bunch of women (being a trifle mad may help your application)

If you are interested and want to find out more details contact Dayavajri on dayavajri@tiscali.co.uk or you may spot Ratnagita around the Buddhist centre!

Message from Aryamati:

Please give my thanks to everyone who kindly sent me BEAUTIFUL cards. Still v. weak, but messages v. cheering. **LOTS OF METTA** **Aryamati**

Sangha Walk to Edale:

On **Saturday 27th February**, 11.30am to 2.30pm. Led by Louis, this is a medium grade five mile walk between the towns of Hope and Edale, in the Peak District. Suitable for everyone - no experience needed. See MBC web-site for more details.

Quote:

"Successful and unsuccessful people do not vary greatly in their abilities. They vary in their desires to reach their potential." Found in the 'A Joke A Day' section of my iGoogle homepage!!! **Nishpara**

Energy Saving at the MBC

This year I want to make energy saving at the MBC a priority in my work as the Facilities Manager .

I'd love to work with a team on this project. I envisage us being able to make some changes quickly - others will need longer term planning, investigation and fundraising. I certainly can't bring about changes without some help from the Sangha, it's a big and exciting project which I am very happy to take the lead on but want to work with others.

Some changes I have made already:

Moving to energy saving bulbs on the main dimmer systems in the shrine rooms.

All the staircases have low energy bulbs.

Accurate timings on the central heating systems, so we heat for the times we need it only and reduce waste.

Improvements in draft proofing in the centre team office and installing reflective sheeting behind radiators (big thanks for Doug for doing this work)

Ideally I'd like to meet up with those of you who want to share ideas and then take ACTION!! I'd like people to feel free to contribute in many different ways. Come and share your ideas, maybe offer to go to B&Q to buy what we need, help change the light bulbs, investigate grants, keep the Sangha up-to-date with what we are doing through updates in the newsletter. I think it will be a great project to work on together because we can bring about some changes very quickly and help the MBC become more environmentally friendly and save money.

INTERESTED? Email me at Suryaka@manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk

Love After Love by Derek Walcott

The time will come when,
with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving at your own door,
in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the others welcome and say,
sit here.
Eat.

You will love again the stranger who was yourself.
Give wine.
Give bread.
Give back your heart to itself,
to the stranger who has loved you all your life,
whom you have ignored for another,
who knows you by heart.

Take down the love letters from the bookshelf,
the photographs,
the desperate notes,
peel your own image from the mirror.
Sit.
Feast on your life

Jyotivans's Shrine Cabin Unveiled

Fifteen months ago it was the dream of the Jyotivana women's community to have a shrine-room where the community could meditate together. Our previous meditation space was an unheated attic accessible only via a loft ladder, which ruled out Vidyamala from joining the others due to her back injuries, and was unsuitable for Amitasuri in cold weather due to her kidney condition. In fact several of the rest of us found it rather gruelling in the winter months! The dripping and splashing from the water tanks in the roof space was another issue - arguably a spur to deeper concentration but one I wouldn't be sorry to leave behind!

The house was being used to maximum capacity with seven in the community so the only solution seemed to be an outdoor shrine room in some sort of log cabin - probably too expensive for us to afford, we thought.... But enthusiasm grew for the cabin and we decided to go for it, enlisting the help of the Sangha through fundraising. Munisha had the idea to hold Fundraising Buddhist Film Nights for the Women's Sangha, we thought give it a tryand the rest is history... as they say! The first such night we ate a delicious curry, dhal & rice and settled down to watch what turned out to be the first of many inspiring and enjoyable films. The majority of the £6500 that we raised to pay for the cabin shrine-room came via these film evenings through the small and large donations that were received. But as a community we gained far more than the money, for the evenings were so enjoyable and the sense of support for us and our project so dynamic. We enjoyed welcoming everyone to our community and the ensuing 'explosion' of Sangha was quite amazing with between 20 - 30 women chatting away over dinner and settling down on our sofas for the film. The rumour had got about that we had a big screen for the films - which we did - a large white sheet pinned to the curtains! It's amazing how we all fitted into the lounge.

There were a worrying few months during the credit crunch when cabin prices soared but as Autumn came the cabins we'd been looking at on the Internet went on Sale. We decided to buy then even though we hadn't raised the whole amount. It was the fully insulated version of a timber cabin, with double doors and a window....looking very like a Swiss chalet! (see photo) Sona and Mokshapriya quoted us for installing it. They had a free week in December - and up it went! They both worked long, hard and well as did various members of the community and friends in preparing the site and applying stain and varnish to the finished shed. Amitasuri provided the workers with coffee and bagels. She and Dayanandi also took photos from which Vidyamala has made a



great film - soon to be available on YouTube!

I should mention that we received a great boost to our fundraising when Vidyamala & Amitasuri were granted £750 between them from the Abhayaratna Trust to help fund their use of the cabin. This is a new Charity, set up to support Order Members to live a full life in the Sangha in the face of difficulty due to old age, disability and sickness (watch out for their website soon to be launched).

Today, 3rd January, four of us, including Vidyamala, set up a simple shrine and meditated in the cabin for the first time. It was such a lovely, clear space to meditate in, just bare wooden floors and walls with views out across the snowy garden to the woods of the Kersal Dale Nature Reserve. It was pretty quiet; a woodpecker knocking loudly on braches above us, some birdsong, a few cars on the road nearby. Tonight, with two more community members able to be present, we will perform a dedication ceremony to ritually inaugurate this beautiful new cabin and with it, I think, a new era in the life of Jyotivana Community! On behalf of all of us I'd like to say a very big thank you to all who contributed in any way to creating this cabin! Do come and visit it! But women, watch this space! - the Film Nights have become so popular that we will probably continue them even after we have raised the £600 left that we need for the cabin. The next one will be in February.

Dayanandi 3rd January 2010



Mind

As the fletcher whittles
And makes straight his arrows,
So the master directs
His straying thoughts.

months of experience. I will give you a glimpse of what happens at future meetings as well as reporting back more fully to the Trustees.

I must mention a perhaps foolish highlight which was walking in the snow on the frozen loch! Frightening and exhilarating, glad I did it but wouldn't again!

I thoroughly enjoyed my Sangha welcome on Thursday 21 January. Thank you, all who came, for making it such a warm welcome, and thanks too for the well-wishes I received from those not able to come.

For much of Thursday I had been fluctuating between being anxious with ego-related thoughts and the significance of what I have committed myself to for the next few years being so publicly witnessed.

Regarding the former, I found it helpful to recall something I had been given at the Chairs event. Part of the welcome pack included "15 points for Chairs old and new" (this relates to Bhante giving us several years ago "15 points for Order Members Old and New"). One of these is "Don't worry"! It goes on to say "Worry is a form of fear and thus a fetter. Release from the fetters is by insight. Insight is a process of finding creative responses to habitual tendencies." I found this very helpful. I do want to break free of the fetters - the first three are *fixed self-view, reliance on rites and rituals, and doubt and indecision*. How much easier to consider them as "finding creative responses to habitual tendencies"!

Regarding the latter, I felt very much in touch with a sense of wanting to serve the MBC, the Sangha, the people of Manchester and indeed all beings. What an honour I feel in being here. I have remained in touch with this during this past week. I intend to give a transcript of what I said at my welcome in the next newsletter.

Another theme on my mind over the last month has been Ksanti. Usually translated as patience, it has other connotations such as tolerance. I have been reflecting on this because of all the input and ideas I have had or been given since being appointed. I will be very pleased with some things if they are in place when I leave. Others I want to implement now! Ksanti is definitely called for.

I was thinking of this on the bus coming into Manchester a few mornings ago. My route is taking longer than usual because of all the Metrolink roadworks. As we drew up to one bus stop where maybe ten people were going to get on, the man behind me started expletting. (Is that a word?) He was so angry! I was shocked and quite intolerant of him! Each time we had to stop to let more people on, he would begin again. And for a few more stops, I too would have this dialogue of intolerance going round my head! So much for Ksanti! Eventually the incongruity of what I was doing struck me, and I was able to turn my mental states around before the end of the journey and feel how troubled he must be. May we all become aware of our mental states and recognise the choice we have to change them!

Until next time, with metta,
Dayamala

Recognising the Heroes

I used to hear the footsteps in the corridor as I worked at Breathworks. That's someone of authority I used to think as the boots said 'purpose and power'. I'd sometimes see Vajramudita just before or after a Trustees Meeting. I admired her courage entering what seemed to me a sort of lion's den. I remember wishing her well prior to one and then doing a brief Metta Bhavana where I imagined her to be a Boadicea figure going into battle. Her vulnerable side I witnessed also as she did betray some of the pain. It's my impression that Vajramudita was pivotal in turning round the Centre's finances, bringing in controls and monitoring and also innovations like room hiring, and therefore saving the Centre from an even worse crisis. She doesn't seem to get the credit she deserves for not only her hard work (she does too much you know) but for the way her skills and determination have benefited the Centre.

I can speak from personal experience about her kindness and the encouragement she gives to her team members. As my boss she

had to cope with my ups and downs. She values harmony and encourages open communication and understanding of others in the team.

A product of Bolton School, known for excellence, she would find herself teased for any hint of a headmistress tone in her 'Now girls' pronouncements. She was one of us in the team and revealed much of her struggle to keep up with the demands of children and family, Girl Guides and work.

I fell for her when in the middle of the difficulties, which led to my leaving, she was the personification of kindness as she listened, or rather indulged me. As Ananda was to say of the Buddha I can say of Vajramudita, 'She who was so kind'. She is without doubt the most beautiful boss I've had but it was the moments of tenderness like when I related some painful difficulty I was having that set her apart. I owe her a great debt of gratitude and wish her the peaceful heart that is her due.

metta, **Sanghaketu**

News from Taraloka Womens' Retreat Centre

After the New Year retreat finished, the decorators got to work!! Our support team was joined by Akasacitta, Saddhahadaya and Gill and now our dining room and lounge are looking great. Look at our web-site blog for some photos. (www.taraloka.org.uk) At present there is an Order weekend in progress - twenty dharmacarinis from the North of England are here. Next weekend there is an introductory weekend. And the weekend after that Lindsay and Vajratara are running a weekend for young women.

Here is a selection of what's happening in **February**. More details are on our website.

Work as Practice, 7 - 12th

In his book "Awake at Work" Michael Carroll suggests "If we take a moment to slow down and open up to our work circumstances, we will discover that work is continually inviting us

- to help, not hide;
- to listen openly, not to close up;
- to connect, not detach;
- to perfect our skilfulness, not put it in question.

But in our impatience to succeed and become better, faster and more profitable, we overlook the fact that work with all its pressures and problems, is encouraging us to be engaged, resourceful, and alive - right here, right now: to be simply awake at work".

Is this your experience of work?

Taravandana thinks it could be and it's what this short retreat is all about. If she's right - and she has a lot of experience helping people develop their work skills - then it could be five days that change your life radically.

Generating Bodhi Resolve, 12 - 21st

This is the first of this year's four meditation retreats for women who are pursuing ordination into the WBO. The focus of this one is Vasubandhu's Four Factors - practices that he recommends as leading to the arising of the wish to gain Enlightenment for the sake of all beings. The four are:

- contemplation of the Buddha

- contemplation of the faults of conditioned existence
- seeking the most supreme of all fruits of the path
- kindness for beings

If we can only connect with these in our own life and work; reflect on them and give ourselves the opportunity to absorb the benefits of Vasubandhu's wisdom - then something of great value and beauty will come into our experience. That's Vasubandhu's promise. And the Buddha's. We'll be meditating on all this using Vasubandhu's original text to help us. And using Sangharakshita's writing on the subject from his book "The Meaning of the Conversion in Buddhism"

Awakening the Heart : Loving-kindness, 22 - 26th

The poet Shelley wrote "...The great secret of morals is love; or a going out of our own nature, and an identification of ourselves with the beautiful which exists in thought, action, or person, not our own..."

In the Metta Bhavana - a fundamental Buddhist meditation practice - this is exactly what we do : cultivate the positive and counteract the negative. We consciously generate thoughts that are likely to give rise to positive emotions. Over time, and with practice, this has a nurturing effect on our faculty of love. It encourages the development of patience, kindness, and understanding, and in this way we become strengthened and more loving.

If you've already done an introductory weekend with us then this is an ideal next retreat for you. Come and refresh your meditation practice and take it a bit deeper. If you've not meditated before, we'll give you a thorough introduction to this meditation practice. Find out what the Buddha had to say about this practice in the Metta Sutta. Listen to some short talks and instruction (including posture in meditation). Join in discussion. Enjoy some fun things that will probably include chanting and singing! And try out some periods of silence to provide balance and harmony.

Bodywise

Saturday February 6th - Yoga workshop with Padmaradhini.

The theme for my February workshop is CORE STRENGTH and COHESION - we'll explore what this means in yoga practice and how we can practise in a way that supports strength and cohesion.

So often we think of yoga as mainly about stretching and flexibility - but it is perhaps more useful to explore yoga as a way of opening the body from an active, aligned, strong centre. Disconnecting from our centre in order to reach out into space makes our body vulnerable to injury. Opening the body needs to be balanced by support and cohesion in order to be safe and effective.

In this workshop we will explore two approaches - firstly aligning our bodies in such a way that maintains a connection to our centre and supports force to move through the bones; and alongside this, ways of working in postures that challenge us to develop strength. Over the last few years, I have been increasingly interested in this approach and am looking forward to sharing some of my explorations in this workshop. The workshop, which runs from 10am to 1pm is suitable for all levels of experience.

Introduction to Focusing – 13th and 14th February

Focusing can help us connect with our bodies and listen to our deeper intuitions, which

sometimes get missed in the 'busy-ness' of our lives. Focusing can be used with other practices such as meditation, bodywork and talking therapies. It can help us in resolving old patterns and making decisions or simply as a way of being more in touch with ourselves.

Manjudeva and Jutika are running an introductory weekend at Bodywise on **13th/14th February**. If you would like to know more, please ring Jutika at Bodywise on 0161 833 2528 or look at the Bodywise web site – www.bodywisenaturalhealth.co.uk

Welcoming Trish Baillie – Alexander Technique Practitioner

Lucy Ascham is now on maternity leave and Trish Baillie will be offering Alexander Technique sessions at Bodywise on Fridays. Trish works as a freelance teacher of voice and speech and of the Alexander Technique. She trained in voice studies at The Central School of Speech and Drama where she came to value the relevance of the Alexander Technique to voice work and consequently trained as a teacher. Through the Alexander Technique she works to develop an awareness of how undue tensions interfere with the body's alignment, breath support, breathing, vocal energy and presence. She was Head of Voice at the Manchester School of Theatre for 11 years; has taught Voice and Text in London, Oxford, and Manchester and internationally in Montreal, Paris, Rome, and in San Francisco and teaches on the Alexander Teachers' Training course in Manchester. Her work ranges from teaching in leading drama schools to giving workshops in Voice and the Alexander Technique and to

working as a voice coach privately and in professional theatre.

Yoga Workshop with Christine – Saturday 27 February, 10am-1pm

The theme of this workshop is "Creating stability and cohesion. Exploring the power of the standing postures" and it is suitable for those with at least 3 months yoga experience.

Please note – All events need to be booked in advance.

Breathworks

There are still a few places left on the 8-week Living Well with Pain and Illness course starting on **Tuesday February 9th from 1:30 to 4pm**. The course, held at the Buddhist Centre, is run by Breathworks, a not-for-profit organisation with many years' experience of sharing mindfulness-based approaches to living with pain, fatigue, ill health and the stress that can come with them.

For more information go to <http://breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk> or ring 0161 834 1110 or

Next Newsletter:

The deadline for next month's newsletter is **20th February**. Please email any items that you want included to:

mbcnewsletter@gmail.com

To receive the newsletter by email contact:

info@manchesterbuddhistcentre.org.uk

February

Mon	01	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja - Mahasraddha on Going for Refuge	7 - 9:30pm
Sat	06	Bodywise: Yoga Workshop - Core Strength & Cohesion led by Padmaradhini	10am - 1pm
Sun	07	Day for Men Mitras led by Arthaketu	10:30am - 4:30pm
Mon	08	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja - Dayamala on Confession of Faults	7 - 9:30pm
Fri-Sun	12-14	Weekend for Women who have asked for ordination led by Vajradarshini	Derbyshire
Sat-Sun	13-14	Focusing with Manjudeva & Jutika	10am - 5pm both days
Mon	15	Parinirvana Day 2	9:30pm
Mon	22	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja - Buddhashanti on Rejoicing in Merits	7 - 9:30pm
Sat	27	Bodywise: Yoga workshop – Creating Stability led by Christine	10am - 1pm
Sat	27	Sangha Walk to Edale	11:30am - 2:30pm
Sun	28	One Day Course - Going Further with Buddhism	10:30am - 4:30pm
Sun	28	Full Moon Puja to White Tara	5:45 - 6:45pm

March

Mon	01	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja - Ratnaguna on Entreaty and Supplication	7 - 9:30pm
Mon	01	Breathworks: Living Well with Stress - 8-week course starts	7 - 9:30pm
Tue	02	Women's Practice Night for Mitras and Order Members led by Dayamala	7 - 9:30pm
Sat	06	Bodywise: Shiatsu CPD day for practitioners with Shuddhabha	10am - 4pm
Sun	07	One Day Course: Going Deeper with Meditation	10:30am - 4:30pm
Mon	08	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja - Chandana on the Heart Sutra	7 - 9:30pm
Tue	09	Breathworks: Living Well with Pain and Illness - 8-week course starts	1:30 - 4pm
Tue	09	Buddhism Introductory, Going Deeper and Level 3 six-week courses start	7 - 9:30pm
Wed	10	Meditation Introductory and Going Deeper six-week courses start	7 - 9:30pm
Sat-Sun	13-14	Opening into Wholeness - a weekend of bodywork, play & meditation with Dhammagita	10am - 5pm
Sun	14	One Day Course - Introduction to Buddhism	10:30am - 4:30pm
Mon	15	Sangha Night: Sevenfold Puja - Taravandana on Transference of Merits & Self Surrender	7 - 9:30pm
Sat	20	Bodywise: Yoga workshop – Playing with Gravity with Christine	10am - 1pm
Sun	21	Study Day - The Heart Sutra: an ode to emptiness led by Buddharakshita	10am - 5pm
Sun	21	One Day Course - Introduction to Meditation	10:30am - 4:30pm
Mon	22	Sangha Night: The Work of Clear Vision – a talk by Munisha	7 - 9:30pm
Fri-Sun	26-29	Weekend Retreat - study focus 'The Song of the Yogi's Joy' led by Arthaketu	
Sat	27	Drumming Workshop with Adam Warne - see MBC website for more	1:30 - 5pm
Mon	29	Sangha Night: tba	7 - 9:30pm
Tue	30	Full Moon Puja to Vajrapani	5:45 - 6:45pm

Please note the views and opinions expressed in the Newsletter are those of the individual contributors and are not necessarily those held by the trustees of Manchester Buddhist Centre or by the FWBO/WBO in general.

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www.earthcafe.co.uk
www.bodywisenaturalhealth.co.uk
www.breathworks-mindfulness.org.uk
www.clear-vision.org
www.manchestermitras.blogspot.com
www.sanghasocial.com for monthly walks

Friends of the Western Buddhist Order Links:

www.goingonretreat.com
www.fwbo.org
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